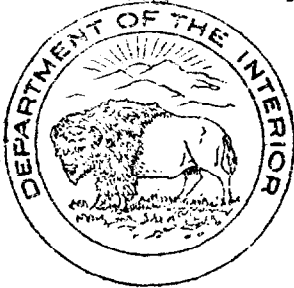


Office Memorandum
and



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release TO THE AM's OF
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1944.

In spite of efforts to reduce the large inventories of frozen fish and shellfish, which throughout the year have been consistently higher than in 1943, holdings of fishery products in freezers reached the all-time high of 123,699,000 pounds on September 1, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported today.

Previously, the largest quantity of fish ever reported in storage was 117,805,000 pounds, the amount held on December 1, 1941. Present holdings represent an increase of nearly 14,000,000 pounds over August 1, and of more than 30,000,000 pounds over September 1, 1943. Records for the past five years show that average holdings for September 1 are about 94,000,000 pounds.

The largest single item in the inventory of frozen fish and shellfish is halibut, with 17,636,000 pounds in storage. The average or normal quantity of frozen halibut on hand at this season is about 13,700,000 pounds. More halibut has been frozen this year, the Fish and Wildlife Service explained, because an unusually large proportion of the catch was landed in Alaskan ports on account of the price situation. Because halibut fishing began about a month late this year, landings will continue unusually late in the fall and the carry-over of halibut stocks during the winter is expected to be much greater than normal.

Next to halibut are the holdings of mackerel, which now total 11,800,000 pounds, compared with an average of 7,400,000 at this season. The September 1 figure for mackerel is an increase of about 800,000 pounds over the preceding month. Cod and haddock fillets, on the other hand declined.

Holdings of whiting increased by 3,000,000 pounds during August, normally a month of considerable activity in this fishery. Although stocks of frozen whiting now total 9,410,000 pounds, they are below the average for this fish. Among other salt water species, salmon holdings are up about 4 million pounds, compared with last month, a normal seasonal increase.

Among fresh water species, stocks of frozen lake herring are approximately six times as large as last year, although the opening of the new herring season is only a few weeks distant. Whitefish, blue pike, lake trout, and most other common lake and river species also show increases over last year. Compared with August 1, however, the fresh water total has declined slightly--11,707,000 pounds as against 12,668,000.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is cooperating with the fishing industry and with other Government agencies in an effort to move stocks of fish now in storage into trade channels to make room for the heavy catches normally made in the fall months in certain areas, and to provide space for Army holdings of frozen products.